United Nations A/56/320

General Assembly

Distr.: General
23 August 2001

Original: English

General Assembly
Fifty-sixth session
Item 111 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Operational activities for development: triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system

Triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report is submitted in compliance with General Assembly resolution 53/192 of 15 December 1998 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2001/1 of 10 July 2001. A comprehensive analysis of the implementation of resolution 53/192 is included in addendum 1 to this report and is complemented by the report of the Secretary-General on the progress in the implementation of the multi-year funding frameworks (MYFFs) and evaluation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) (A/56/70-E/2001/58), and on the comprehensive statistical data on operational activities for development for the year 1999 (A/56/70/Add.1-E/2001/58/Add.1), and the preliminary report of the Secretary-General on comprehensive statistical data on operational activities for the year 2000 (A/56/70/Add.2).

* A/56/50.

** The report was finalized taking into account the views expressed by Member States at the substantive session of 2001 of the Economic and Social Council on the formulation of policy recommendations.

01-51940 (E) 260901

Contents

		Paragraphs	*Page*
I.	Introduction	1–2	3
II.	Global challenges to United Nations development cooperation	3–9	3
III.	Global challenges, finance for development, management reforms and funding operational activities for development	10–22	5
IV.	A platform for the future: integration in national efforts and national ownership	23–28	7
V.	Intergovernmental oversight of operational activities	29–33	9
VI.	Strategic frameworks	34–50	10
VII.	Impact evaluation of operational activities	51–53	14
VIII.	Some issues of field-level coordination	54–65	15
	A. Simplification and harmonization of rules and procedures	54	15
	B. Resident coordinator system	55–57	15
	C. Common premises and shared services	58	16
	D. Monitoring and evaluation	59–60	16
	E. Involvement of specialized agencies	61	18
	F. Cooperation with international financial institutions	62–65	18
IX.	Other dimensions of operational activities	66–73	19
	A. Relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development cooperation	66–67	19
	B. Gender in development	68–69	19
	C. Regional dimensions	70–72	20
	D. Technical and economic cooperation among developing countries	73	21

I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared in accordance with General Assembly resolution 53/192 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2001/1 on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. It is complemented by the report of the Secretary-General on the progress in the implementation of the multi-year funding frameworks (MYFFs) and evaluation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) (A/56/70-E/2001/58), already submitted to the Council at its substantive session of 2001, and by two addenda containing comprehensive statistical data on operational activities for development, for 1999 (A/56/70/Add.1-E/2001/58/Add.1) and 2000 (A/56/70/Add.2).

2. This report is a synopsis, which summarizes a more detailed analysis and assessment of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 53/192 presented in addendum 1 (A/56/320/Add.1). It highlights the conclusions reached in that analysis and outlines the challenges facing United Nations development cooperation. In accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 2001/1, the report includes recommendations on the role and responsibilities for development of the United Nations system for consideration by the General Assembly. Those recommendations take into account the views expressed by Member States during the debate on the triennial comprehensive policy review at the Council's substantive session of 2001 on the basis of an interim report (E/2001/66) and additional information provided by system organizations. The main underlying assumption of the analysis and the recommendations is that United Nations development cooperation operates on the basis of the principles of universality, neutrality and country specificity, and its objective is to provide a coherent and integrated response to national development efforts in full respect of national priorities.

II. Global challenges to United Nations development cooperation

3. The present triennial policy review provides an important opportunity for dialogue among Member States on the future of United Nations development cooperation. The review is taking place at a critical juncture in development cooperation and is the first of its kind since the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[1] which identified challenging time-bound targets, and, as such, offers a key frame of reference for the operational activities for development of the United Nations system. Recent global conferences and the Millennium Declaration have helped define and focus the United Nations development agenda. As was highlighted in the Economic and Social Council, at its substantive session of 2001, although the follow-up to the Millennium Declaration is primarily a responsibility of Member States, the United Nations development system can contribute significantly to assisting member countries in achieving the development goals agreed upon in the Millennium Declaration.

4. The operational activities for development of the United Nations system need to respond to a continuously changing global context. The debate at the 2001 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council underlined some of the trends affecting the world economic situation. Globalization, liberalization, technological change and the need for developing countries to integrate into the world economy represent major challenges for development as well as for the role and content of the United Nations operational activities.

5. The United Nations Millennium Declaration recognized globalization as the central challenge of our times. In a world where problems of extreme poverty and disease rooted in inequality and conflicts still threaten the entire human family, and where the benefits of globalization are not equally distributed and many countries and social groups have no access to them, the United Nations development system is called upon to assist developing countries in enhancing their own capacities to address the complex dimensions of globalization so that they can take advantage of the new opportunities and enormous potential for growth created by it, in order to reduce poverty. The system is also required to place poverty eradication at the centre of its development support efforts.

6. In this global environment, new technologies, such as information and communication technologies (ICT), provide new opportunities and represent a potentially crucial vehicle for economic development and empowerment.[2] With the right mix of public policies and knowledge infrastructure, these

technologies can help programme countries to overcome or mitigate traditional development gaps, and prevent the risk of their being marginalized from the globalization process. On the other hand, the access to these technologies is not evenly distributed. As emphasized in the agreed conclusions of the coordination segment of the Economic and Social Council adopted in 2001 (E/2001/L.16), the United Nations system can play a key role in helping to bridge the digital divide, by promoting transfer of technology to developing countries and accelerating access to information knowledge for developing countries.

7. The United Nations system is thus called upon to play an enhanced development role to meet new global challenges, and the scope of its development cooperation continues to expand as new tasks are added. For example, the scope of operational activities has increased to include situations where conflict and post-conflict conditions exist, requiring new and more flexible response capacity. Pressing demands for support arise in new and cross-cutting areas in order to: (a) strengthen capacity-building and enable developing countries to better integrate in the world economy, (b) help translate and adapt international development goals and objectives to the national context and develop concrete programmes at the country level and (c) respond to new political, humanitarian and socio-economic challenges. Issues such as governance, humanitarian assistance, and various aspects of peace-building and conflict prevention have acquired greater prominence. Traditional boundaries between normative functioning and standard-setting, advocacy and technical assistance have become less clearly defined.

8. The United Nations development system is expected to adapt and respond flexibly and in a timely fashion to the new development challenges. Its development cooperation interacts with a wider range of stakeholders than in the past, since the role of Governments in the productive process is changing in most countries. In this context, the system is expected to intensify its internal coordination, while ensuring a coherent and integrated response to national development needs. Although its development architecture and culture have constantly evolved over the last 50 years, proving to be remarkably resilient, the United Nations system would not be able to face the current challenges without further challenging itself.

9. To face these powerful challenges, the United Nations country teams may need to upgrade, in light of national priorities and needs, their capacities in order to be able to make an optimal use of the resources and specific comparative advantages of the United Nations system organizations. A different mix of skills, expertise, services and working methods may be required at the country level.

Recommendation 1

The General Assembly may wish to reaffirm the universal, neutral, multilateral and grant character of United Nations operational activities. It may wish to emphasize the need to strengthen the operational role of the United Nations development system in assisting programme countries, at their request, to respond more effectively to the economic and social impact of globalization and to better integrate in the world economy, so as to accelerate their growth and development and reduce poverty. It may wish to call upon the organizations of the United Nations system to strengthen and adapt their strategies and activities and enhance their coordination and collaboration, taking into account the need to assist programme countries in the follow-up to international development goals of the Millennium Summit of the United Nations and major United Nations global conferences.

Recommendation 2

The General Assembly may wish to acknowledge the opportunity represented by ICT to accelerate development and empower programme countries. It may wish to encourage the United Nations system to support, through its operational activities for development, national efforts to acquire the capacities and infrastructure required to mobilize ICT and put ICT at the service of development, inter alia, through a more intensive use of technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) modalities.

The General Assembly may also wish to note that information technologies offer a significant opportunity as a means to support more effectively the delivery of development

cooperation by the United Nations system and accordingly encourage their use.

The General Assembly may wish to encourage all system organizations to collaborate with the recently established ICT Task Force, inter alia, through financial support, and request the Secretary-General to report to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2002 on progress achieved in using operational activities to support ICT.

Recommendation 3

The General Assembly may wish to request the United Nations system organizations to review, in consultation with the concerned Governments, the technical skill profiles of their operational divisions and country offices, in order to ensure that they have access to the mix of expertise and technical knowledge, including ICT knowledge, required to respond to the requests of support from programme countries facing their current development and global challenges.

The General Assembly may also wish to request the organizations of the United Nations system to review, individually and collectively, the adequacy of the skill profiles of their country offices and subregional or regional support systems, introduce appropriate organizational adjustments, including necessary collaboration with other partners, and report, through the Secretary-General, on this subject to the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, in the context of the triennial policy review, through the Economic and Social Council.

III. Global challenges, finance for development, management reforms and funding operational activities for development

10. The global challenges recognized by Member States in the United Nations Millennium Declaration require the mobilization of considerable financial resources, both domestic and international, to achieve the international development goals and, more generally, to finance the development process of developing countries. Domestically, these resources can be generated by a variety of mechanisms, ranging from the savings-investment process to other forms of domestic resource mobilization. External capital flows — in particular long-term flows such as foreign direct investment (FDI) — can play an important role in complementing domestic resources by transferring resources from capital-surplus to capital-importing countries, although there are risks associated with the volatility of short-term financial flows. Flows of external capital and domestic resource mobilization are facilitated by trade liberalization and economic integration, which in turn depend on the expansion and diversification of productive capacities. Rapid trade liberalization can yield heavy adjustment costs in the short and medium term. Moreover, in a liberalized trade situation, commodity-dependent countries are particularly affected by the excessive volatility in commodity prices.

11. International financial cooperation for development and other forms of international official financing (including external debt management measures) play an important role in situations in which there are inadequate domestic resources, insufficient foreign private capital flows and structural imbalances in trade relations. International development cooperation in the form of either official development assistance (ODA) or other forms of official assistance can be an important catalyst to stimulate investment and domestic funding, an essential provider of global public goods and services and a primary source of relief in humanitarian crisis. If applied through appropriate technical assistance and capacity-building activities, development cooperation can be a basic means to promote and accelerate processes of recovery and development, especially in least developed countries and in other lower- or middle-income countries in urgent need of assistance to improve their trading position and growth potentials.

12. The role of the United Nations in this domain has been highlighted in the preparatory work of the upcoming International Conference on Financing for Development, planned for March 2002, which aims at defining a strategy for a better mobilization of resources for development. The United Nations, together with the Bretton Woods institutions and other international organizations, can play a central role in facilitating the management of global economic

integration, helping to develop adequate policy responses by the developing countries and promoting a broad-based and participatory dialogue among all development partners to orient international efforts to ensure that globalization contributes to development.

13. Although programme countries still view the United Nations system as a valued partner, with a comparative advantage in numerous areas, the United Nations development system will have to play its role in a more intensely competitive environment, with a broader development agenda and with reduced resources.

14. The reform process launched in 1997, on the premise that it would lead to enhanced and more stable development cooperation funding, aimed at a more effective and efficient use of available resources through better management. In the past few years, the organizations of the system have carried out far-reaching reforms and internal reorganizations, with the intent of maximizing programme impact, minimizing administrative costs, fostering greater coordination and coherence, and ensuring more efficient and strategic-oriented decision-making processes. All these initiatives have started to have a positive impact on the effectiveness and relevance of the United Nations operational activities.

15. One basic objective of these United Nations system initiatives was to achieve greater internal synergy and impact through a more integrated and collaborative approach to development cooperation, by intensifying interaction among system organizations through improved inter-agency modalities (including the establishment of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG)), streamlining the strategic direction of operational activities through goal-oriented collaboration and programmatic coherence (with the introduction of processes such as the common country assessment (CCA) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), with measures to strengthen the United Nations resident coordinator system and the cohesion of United Nations country teams, as well as common premises and integrated information services, providing a harmonized/unified image of the system's presence at the country level, and expanding the dialogue with the Bretton Woods institutions and other international financial institutions. The introduction of MYFFs[3] and the reinforcement of results-based management are steps towards more efficient programming, monitoring and evaluation.

16. With these reforms in place, the United Nations system is posed to play an effective role as an advocate and as an agent of change and development. CCA and UNDAF have created the basis to improve planning and delivery of services as well as monitoring and evaluation of operational activities. A strengthened resident coordinator system and sharing of premises and services will contribute to optimal utilization of resources and enhanced efficiency. The efforts to harmonize these tools with the Government's policies and planning should improve results and generate national ownership of programmes and projects.

17. Nevertheless, availability of adequate resources for operational activities is an essential condition for sustaining the momentum of these reforms and enhancing efficiency and impact. Funding operational activities should be sufficient, stable and carried out on a predictable and assured basis. Regular or core resources should continue to be the foundation of operational activities, if their multilateral and neutral character is to be preserved.

18. The challenges posed by global integration, the need to pursue international development goals and the expanding scope of operational activities amount to an impressive agenda for the United Nations development system but, if the resources required to respond meaningfully to these challenges are not available, this agenda is likely to remain unfulfilled.

19. While the global challenges and agenda have translated into a sustained demand for United Nations development support and a continuous call for an effective and efficient use of its resources, the deterioration of funding for United Nations operational activities, especially core funding, sends a contradictory message regarding the intentions of the Member States. Resources remain insecure, unstable, stagnant, volatile and vulnerable, threatening to result in unfulfilled needs and underutilized potentials and capacities of the United Nations development system.

20. Despite the frequent emphasis on the need to expand long-term development support to countries struggling to integrate in the world economy, the system's capacity to provide this support is hindered by the growing preference of contributing countries for short-term and dedicated development funding. This trend often resulted in the failure to reach a critical

mass of resources required for long-term development cooperation and compromised the efficient use of funds towards a more integrated development support. The introduction of MYFFs has not managed to reverse the negative trends in core funding. Core or regular non-conditional voluntary funding in many organizations has fallen far behind the projections made by the Member States, for example, in the Executive Boards of United Nations funds and programmes, while non-core or earmarked funding has grown. Moreover, financial support to United Nations development cooperation still comes from a limited number of donors, and efforts to broaden the donor base have not yet yielded the expected results. The analysis in addendum 1 to this report shows that the financial situation of United Nations development cooperation has hardly improved during the past three years.

21. A United Nations development system, including the specialized agencies, deprived of critical funding for technical cooperation, as well as for less traditional activities such as social advocacy, economic reforms and the pursuit of global themes, is also deprived of its potential to support national development efforts and exercise its catalytic role in facilitating the integration of developing countries in the world economy. What is at stake is not only the country-level infrastructure of United Nations development support, which was built over decades and has, so far, been considered an invaluable contribution to national development by both the international community and programme countries, but also the very capacity of the United Nations system to facilitate a collective response of the international community to the challenge of globalization, and ensure that globalization becomes a positive force benefiting all peoples in respect of the principles of human dignity, equality and equity.

22. It is therefore necessary to reach a renewed consensus and commitment on financing United Nations development cooperation and to place it on a more secure, stable and predictable footing, in the pursuit of the United Nations development agenda. The forthcoming International Conference on Financing for Development provides an opportunity to achieve a breakthrough in this area. A full consideration of this central issue in the triennial review should lay the foundation for building renewed and real consensus to reverse the present trends and achieve a substantive and sustained increase in the funding for operational activities for development.

Recommendation 4

While acknowledging the progress achieved to improve the functioning of the United Nations development system and the need to continue efforts in that direction, the General Assembly may wish to re-emphasize the need for a substantial and sustained increase in the core or regular resources for operational activities for development on a predictable, continued and assured basis in order to assist developing countries in facing the challenges of globalization and integration in the world economy and make progress towards international development goals. The Assembly may also express concern that there has not been, so far, any significant change in the resource situation of operational activities and may recommend to the Economic and Social Council to consider, at its substantive session of 2003, the conclusions that will be reached at its triennial policy review and at the International Conference on Financing for Development planned for 2002 and review progress on the issue of funding of operational activities for development of the United Nations system.

IV. A platform for the future: integration in national efforts and national ownership

23. The management reforms introduced in recent years in the United Nations system aimed at greater internal coherence and coordination in United Nations development cooperation. The impact of these measures is examined in the following sections, which focus on outstanding issues related to the intergovernmental oversight of operational activities, lessons learned from their impact evaluation, strategic frameworks for programming, and questions related to the field-level coordination of operational activities.

24. The views expressed by Member States at the substantive session of 2001 of the Economic and Social Council, as well as by the executive heads, the country teams and other representatives of system organizations, and the analysis undertaken in preparation of the triennial review, lead to the important conclusion that, in order to meet the new demands of support, it is not sufficient to reform the

United Nations system management structures and enhance internal coordination and coherence. In order to face the global challenges cited in the previous sections, the focus on internal coherence in the 1997 reform, which emphasized the notion of "collaborative programming and close consultation with Governments",[4] should now be taken to a higher level. In order to become more relevant in facing the global challenges, development support provided by the United Nations system should aim at a much closer integration with national development policies and programmes.

25. A more integrated approach has two dimensions: a better integration of national development efforts, and the closer integration of external assistance with national programmes. Regarding the first, a review of national approaches to development shows that there is a need to overcome the fragmented approach to national development programming and redesign social and economic policies in a more harmonized and coherent way. The challenge for the United Nations system is to provide support to programme countries in integrating national policies and programmes as part of their own efforts to integrate into the world economy, while attenuating the social, environmental and economic imbalances that this integration may entail. The United Nations system should pursue goals and devise strategies in response to national priorities that take account of the interdependence between global and national dimensions, global themes and country specificity, with the aim of remaining relevant and responsive to national development.

26. Regarding the second dimension of integration, consistent with the guidance repeatedly provided by the General Assembly,[5] external support of the United Nations system (and other international partners) should be translated into country-led development initiatives. Greater integration of development cooperation in national efforts should become the "leitmotif" for United Nations development cooperation, ensuring the continuing involvement and leadership of national authorities in programming and managing operational activities and a more intensive dialogue with the relevant constituencies in recipient countries.

27. In the debate at the substantive session of 2001 of the Economic and Social Council, Member States repeatedly stressed the need to link the demand for increased coordination of operational activities of the United Nations system with full national ownership of development cooperation supported by the United Nations system (and other sources), and national leadership in its coordination. The increasing demand for national ownership of development cooperation requires integrating cooperation activities with national development efforts, so that external assistance does not generate separate development structures or initiatives, but is fully absorbed into national endeavours, under the leadership and monitoring of national authorities.

28. The focus of operational activities of the United Nations system should shift from internal coordination of development assistance to integration into national efforts. Therefore, the system should shift from information exchange to shared programmes not only within the system but with the Government and other stakeholders, from process-focused reforms to increased attention to substantive content of development support, from narrowly focused project execution to capacity-building, from internal system coherence to greater development impact on recipient countries. It is necessary to move beyond coordination among system organizations and common premises of United Nations country offices to coherence with national policies and programmes. There is a need to look beyond the paradigms of harmonized programming to focus on integrated country-driven policy frameworks with the highest degree of national participation. Modalities and mechanisms introduced in the course of the past reforms (for example, the programme approach, capacity-building, national execution and UNDAF) should now be transformed into instruments for integration into national processes.

Recommendation 5

In accordance with its resolutions 53/192, 50/120, 47/199 and 44/211, the General Assembly may wish to reiterate that national plans and priorities constitute the only viable frame of reference for United Nations system national programming of operational activities at the country level and urge the United Nations development system, in order to assist programme countries in meeting the current challenges of globalization and international development goals, to integrate its country-level operations in national policies and programmes under the leadership and with full

participation of the Government, full involvement of national structures and institutions and dialogue with all relevant stakeholders. The Assembly may also wish to request that a report be submitted for the consideration of the Economic and Social Council, at its substantive session of 2003, on progress achieved in this regard.

V. Intergovernmental oversight of operational activities

29. Effective intergovernmental oversight and control are at the heart of the efficient and effective functioning of operational activities and their conformity with the basic principles and "fundamental characteristics" of the United Nations system (universality, voluntary and grant nature, neutrality, multilateralism and flexibility), as repeatedly reaffirmed by the General Assembly. As part of the efforts to restructure and revitalize the work of the United Nations in the economic and social fields, the Assembly, in its resolution 48/162, revisited the functions of three key governing bodies of the United Nations that are relevant in this area: the Executive Boards of the funds and programmes, the Economic and Social Council and the Assembly itself. Accordingly, the Boards function under the overall policy guidance of the Assembly and under the authority of the Council. They should implement policies formulated by the Assembly, under the coordination and guidance of the Council. The Boards should also recommend new initiatives to the Council and, through the Council, to the Assembly, as necessary.

30. The General Assembly's policy role is mainly exercised through the triennial policy review resolutions, while the Economic and Social Council discharges its coordination responsibilities through a number of channels, such as its consideration of the annual reports of the Executive Boards, the consolidated list of issues prepared by UNDG, joint meetings of the Boards and, most importantly, through the operational activities segment of its substantive sessions, when progress reports on the implementation of the triennial policy review resolutions are discussed.

31. The complexity of the current demands placed on United Nations system development cooperation, in the context of globalization and international development, may require a stronger role for the Economic and Social Council in the area of operational activities for development.

32. In recent years, the Economic and Social Council has emerged as a strategic and vibrant forum that brings together the entire United Nations system, including the finance and trade institutions, to address major issues of international economic cooperation. The Council thus has the potential for bringing together key officials dealing with development cooperation and offering an opportunity to integrate the debate on operational activities of the United Nations system with the broader consideration of international development cooperation. The challenge of integrating development cooperation in national development efforts, identified in the previous section as a possible leitmotif for the future, requires the interaction of a variety of interlocutors, at the intergovernmental level. The Council could provide a forum where high-level policy makers directly involved in development cooperation would discuss the integration of global development cooperation issues in national development efforts. This forum could be a unique opportunity for a substantive dialogue among these key stakeholders, not only on the critical issues but also on the overall direction and orientations of development cooperation, and provide overall guidance to the United Nations system and the governing bodies of its organizations.

33. In order to realize this potential of the Economic and Social Council, the participation in the operational activities segment would have to be at a high level and be extended to a wider range of stakeholders, in addition to representatives of Governments and the United Nations system, so as to include key representatives of official institutions in programme countries directly involved in development cooperation, as well as international development assistance partners (that is to say, bilateral aid institutions and other multilateral agencies) and, where appropriate, representatives of the civil society and the private sector. The dialogue on development cooperation, in the context of the Council's operational activities segment, should be designed to encourage a greater harmonization of policies, instruments and procedures of all external partners involved in development cooperation, as a basis for a more

effective integration of all external assistance into national development.

Recommendation 6

While reiterating the contents of its resolution 48/162, which details the respective functions of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Executive Boards of the United Nations funds and programmes, the Assembly may wish to encourage the Council to strengthen its role as a forum for reflection as well as for consideration of and overall guidance on operational activities for development, including of bilateral and multilateral cooperation, and that originating from non-governmental organizations and the private sector, with the objective of promoting a more effective integration of development cooperation into national development efforts.

In enhancing the Economic and Social Council's oversight role in the area of operational activities, the General Assembly may also wish to request the Council to emphasize its focus on lessons learned and impact evaluations in the implementation of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, in the wider context of all forms of development cooperation, and provide, on the basis of these evaluations, the governing bodies of United Nations system organizations, in particular the Executive Boards of the United Nations funds and programmes, with appropriate policy guidance on orientations, reforms, and undertakings that these organizations are expected to pursue in order to ensure that a more effective and integrated response to the needs and priorities of recipient countries is given through their operational activities for development.

VI. Strategic frameworks

34. The United Nations Millennium Declaration underscores the multidimensional characteristics of the challenges that developing countries face in the context of interdependence, globalization, and other global development issues. A necessary consequence of this complexity is the need for each developing country to define its own comprehensive country strategy which identifies, in a holistic approach, a long-term vision of its development goals and establish a link among the objectives, targets and interactions that the country intends to pursue to achieve the overarching aims of sustainable development and poverty reduction.

35. In recent years, the international community has created multiple country-level development strategies and frameworks, which go in this direction and involve a variety of actors. These strategies and frameworks frequently overlap. They all generate the expectation that recipient countries will either respond to them or will have a lead role in conceiving, formulating and implementing them.

36. In the case of the United Nations system, two specific strategic frameworks and programming tools have acquired a prominent role, CCA and UNDAF, which aim at enhancing coherence in operational activities and better responding to the national priorities in an integrated and harmonized way. These tools are the response of the system to the many calls, also by the General Assembly (for example, in the context of the triennial policy review), to improve coordination of the United Nations development operations and their programming at the country level, which is considered an essential step towards increasing their effectiveness.

37. With the 1997 reform, high expectations were attached to the introduction of UNDAF, which provides a launching pad to bring about greater coherence and synergy in the programming processes of the United Nations system at the country level. The role of UNDAF and CCA, and the results achieved in their implementation during the past three years, are presented in addendum 1 to this report and, in more detail, in a separate report, which contains an evaluation of these instruments.[6] Both tools have been able to reflect the broad concerns for international development highlighted in the global conferences of the last decade, and represent an attempt to effect a bridge between those concerns and development priorities identified at the country level by national Governments. The increasing awareness, both at the country and at the global level, of the challenges that interdependency and globalization generate in the context of development policies, and the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration by the leaders of the world's nations, provide an opportunity to focus the orientations of these two instruments in

such a way as to better assist developing countries in meeting their goals to reduce poverty and achieve equitable and sustainable development in an increasingly interdependent world.

38. The experience accumulated in a number of countries where these tools have been applied shows that notable advances have been made, that the system is working more coherently at the country level and that UNDAF can be a major tool to induce greater coherence and synergy in the operational activities for development of the United Nations system at the country level.

39. The evaluation of UNDAF has identified different levels of its impact, on both the United Nations system and the recipient countries. In general, the process of formulating UNDAF has strengthened the team spirit within the United Nations at the country level, although a lot remains to be done, especially since the basic paradigms of identity and autonomy of each organization, with separate programming and administrative structures and procedures, continue. A positive impact of UNDAF on country-level system activities should enhance consistency and complementarity among different country programmes and other similar instruments used by United Nations organizations and other development partners. Although there is evidence of some progress in this area, only future evaluations can determine the extent to which this objective has been attained.

40. In order to be relevant in development terms, UNDAF should serve not only as a framework for country programmes of the United Nations system organizations but also as a broader instrument to assist programme countries in achieving their own development goals, including in response to the global challenges identified in several international forums, counting also the Millennium Declaration.

41. When the UNDAF process is based on a good CCA, and both processes are conceived as participatory processes, conducted with full involvement of national partners, they represent an important opportunity to achieve the goal of integrating operational activities in national plans and objectives. By reviewing and analysing the national development situation, identifying key country development issues and allowing a consistent definition of priority areas, CCA can serve as a basic step towards supporting national Governments in formulating their own national policies and better coordinating external assistance, while UNDAF should provide a more coherent integrated response of the United Nations system to national development priorities.

42. The link between CCA and UNDAF, on the one hand, and the country strategy, on the other, that national authorities should define in order to face global development challenges is adequately established if CCA and UNDAF, together with all other frameworks formulated in other contexts (comprehensive development framework (CDF), poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP), sustainable development strategies, integrated frameworks for trade-related technical assistance (IF) etc.), converge towards a nationally defined development strategy that is nationally owned and relies on a full partnership of relevant national and external stakeholders.

43. General Assembly resolution 53/192 emphasized national ownership and full government participation as basic requirements for the formulation of an UNDAF that is consistent with national priorities. The same resolution also noted the importance of closer consultation, in the formulation of UNDAF, with a variety of stakeholders, including relevant development partners.

44. The external evaluation of UNDAF shows that the degree of government involvement in the countries where this process was launched has, so far, been uneven. The involvement of other national development partners in the UNDAF process appears to be still limited.

45. As underlined by many Member States at the substantive session of 2001 of the Economic and Social Council, a condition for a greater integration of these frameworks in the national development processes is a greater involvement of the Government and other national partners in all stages of their formulation and implementation. National involvement means developing a partnership that engages the entire country, from the Government to its legislative structures, its civil society from the national to the community levels, and the private sector. In his consultations with the World Bank, the Secretary-General has recently underlined that effective development cooperation must be founded on the principle of genuine country ownership of comprehensive strategies that address the many dimensions of poverty and sustainable development,

and that national Governments must be in the driver's seat in determining what are the best strategies for their countries to adopt in order to reduce poverty. National ownership is a key indication that the Government accepts full responsibility for coordinating development cooperation and exerts its leadership in determining the development agenda of its country.

46. Moreover, a better dialogue must also be established with all relevant external partners (bilateral donors and other multilateral institutions). Such a broad dialogue is required in order to establish a climate of trust and respect among all stakeholders, while preserving the ultimate responsibility of national Governments for defining national priorities.

47. The capacity of UNDAF and CCA to exert a positive impact on recipient countries also depends on the good quality of the technical work that accompanies these processes. Adequate monitoring must be exerted and improvements in the technical capacities of field offices and national counterpart units should be introduced, as appropriate. Most importantly, these frameworks represent unique opportunities to build analytical and coordination capacities of national partners. To build national capacities in coordination functions should become an essential condition when implementing these processes and should be one of the key ways in which effective national involvement and ownership are pursued. The United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, should collaborate in order to strengthen government capacity so that the Government itself is in charge of all these processes.

48. The concern, also expressed in the debate of the Economic and Social Council at its 2001 substantive session, that there are too many country-level coordination frameworks requires further attention. The proliferation of these strategic frameworks aims at improving coordination but may generate an excessive burden both for the programme countries and for the country staff of the United Nations system as well as other multilateral and bilateral institutions, resulting in higher transaction costs for development cooperation. Some progress could be made by ensuring consistency and coherence among all these frameworks, in both their processes and the resulting documents, and also through better sequencing and harmonization of the activities required by each process, in order to optimize the use of time, information and skilled human resources.

49. Nevertheless, the very existence of a variety of frameworks entails the risk of overlapping and duplicating, unless the Government is truly in charge of designing and coordinating both its own national development strategy and the corresponding development cooperation policy and programmes through a "national development framework", to which all external partners will refer. The key to achieving this ultimate result is the determination of the country to take full responsibility for its own development future. When this is achieved, many operations in separate instruments or frameworks that show a great degree of complementarity and overlap may be unified under the umbrella of the nationally led frameworks, where the necessary country analysis and development strategy will be found.

50. This does not mean that all the varieties of tools and frameworks will necessarily disappear. Different external interlocutors may utilize the same national development framework to prepare their own specific documents or frameworks, if so required for coordination, managerial and institutional purposes, inter alia, for the accountability requirements of each organization. In particular, on the basis of nationally owned strategies, both bilateral donors and multilateral institutions can develop, with the full participation of the Government, their own "business plan", as is the case for UNDAF, which can be considered the business plan of the entire United Nations system in a country, the Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) of the World Bank, and other frameworks more specific for individual organizations of the United Nations or a group of them. As a business plan, UNDAF will become the tool for a more effective harmonization of country programmes of individual system organizations. CCA, in turn, is essentially a contribution of the United Nations system to the assessment of development priorities and should be considered an input into the definition of the development strategy of the country. Its use may be very valuable, in the absence of similar analytical exercises at the country level, especially by linking overall global objectives with country-level priorities. Nevertheless, as demonstrated by the presentation of the country team of the United Republic of Tanzania at the 2001 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, the need to launch a formal CCA may be superseded by the availability of other analytical frameworks that the Government has meanwhile produced and used.

Recommendation 7

The General Assembly may wish to take note of the national experiences so far undertaken with respect to the introduction of UNDAF and CCA as attempts to induce greater coherence and synergy in the operational activities of the United Nations system at the country level, and may wish to encourage the United Nations system to orient future activities in the conduct of these two processes as efforts to provide better responses to national development priorities and policies, provided that both the UNDAF and CCA processes are conducted in full consultation and agreement with the Governments concerned.

In this context, the General Assembly may wish to reiterate that the major responsibility in coordinating external development assistance in general, and operational activities for development of the United Nations system in particular, lies with the national Governments of programme countries, and may wish to re-emphasize that all coordinating activities, including the formulation of strategic coordination frameworks, such as UNDAF and CCA, require the full involvement of national Governments and other national stakeholders in order to ensure that development cooperation activities are country-driven and better integrated in national development policies and priorities.

The General Assembly may wish to stress that national ownership of UNDAF and CCA requires full government participation and leadership in all stages of these processes, and may wish to encourage, in the framework of these processes, the establishment of an open dialogue with civil society and local institutions, in agreement with, and under the guidance of, the respective national Governments.

In pursuing these objectives, the General Assembly may wish to request the United Nations system to intensify capacity-building initiatives to support national Governments in their function of coordinating all forms of external assistance, including that received from the United Nations system, and also through a more effective involvement of programme countries in the management of all forms of strategic coordination frameworks.

In this respect, the General Assembly may also wish to request the Secretary-General to undertake an evaluation of the results achieved with these two processes and to report to the Assembly thereon at its fifty-ninth session, through the Economic and Social Council, in the context of the triennial policy review.

Recommendation 8

The General Assembly may wish to recommend that, when the UNDAF and CCA processes are undertaken, they should aim at producing enhanced consistency and complementarity of country programmes and other similar instruments in individual system organizations, in full integration with national plans and objectives, and that necessary measures be adopted by the United Nations development system to simplify and harmonize programming and country assessment procedures in order to reduce transaction costs to recipient countries by avoiding additional procedural requirements and workload which may cause a burden for programme countries.

The General Assembly may also wish to call on the United Nations development system and other relevant institutions to work towards the harmonization of existing coordinating frameworks launched by multilateral institutions, avoiding duplication of efforts, improving sequencing among frameworks and encouraging full collaboration among them, under the leadership of national Governments, to achieve such harmonization.

The General Assembly may also wish to urge the United Nations development system and encourage other development cooperation institutions to orient these processes so that they primarily aim at generating effective benefits for the recipient countries, and request that the final objective of these strategic instruments be the integration of development cooperation in the national development policies and programmes. In that respect, the Assembly may wish to encourage the United Nations development system and other multilateral institutions to support, upon their request, efforts of programme countries in formulating their own national

development strategies, and make all possible efforts to adjust their development cooperation tools and frameworks to, and integrate them with, these nationally defined strategies.

VII. Impact evaluation of operational activities

51. The United Nations Millennium Declaration adopted in 2000 contains a statement of values, principles and objectives for the international development agenda for the twenty-first century, which will have a profound impact on the contents and direction of the operational activities of the United Nations system in the years ahead. It also provides important benchmarks for systemic monitoring and evaluation. The challenge is now to translate programmes and strategies into action, in an attempt to achieve concrete development results. Developing countries need to develop or continue to refine their own capacity to monitor their own policies and programmes and their implementation, using appropriate methods and indicators. Similarly, the international community will monitor progress in achieving the overall goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration. The translation of the Millennium Declaration goals into targets to be used at the country and regional levels requires further work. The big challenge of the years ahead is to ensure that strategies pursue the adopted path, and development results are achieved. This applies also to the operational activities for development of the United Nations system. Several organizations of the United Nations system have introduced results-based management, in order to establish or reinforce a framework of accountability of their performance in supporting programme countries in achieving their own development targets.

52. In line with this approach, the current policy review of operational activities is predicated, inter alia, on the findings of a series of impact evaluation studies, conducted by the United Nations in response to General Assembly resolution 53/192, paragraph 53, and assessing the extent to which the expected objectives of United Nations development cooperation have been attained. The latest series of evaluations, which followed a first pilot series discussed in the previous triennial comprehensive policy review, focused on the impact of United Nations system support on capacity-building and poverty eradication in six countries. A more detailed presentation of these studies and their findings can be found in addendum 1 to this report.[7]

53. From the work done so far, the following broad inferences could be drawn:

(a) The United Nations system operational activities, with the right policy mix, can play an important and significant role in poverty reduction, and the system's support to capacity-building has been an important element in that process;

(b) The resources available, either internally or externally, for poverty reduction are still inadequate. A minimum level of resources is required to ensure success in capacity-building for poverty eradication. When this condition is met, the gains that can be obtained nationally, regionally and globally by using increased resources in genuine poverty reduction should be considerable;

(c) There is a close relationship between capacity-building and national ownership of operational activities for development, at both the conceptual/planning and implementation stages. It is essential to ensure the appropriate involvement of national organizations, including local beneficiaries and government authorities, in planning and implementing operational activities, as well as in evaluating their effectiveness, since only then can a significant impact be expected;

(d) The recent General Assembly legislation prompted system-wide guidelines on capacity-building as a central objective of operational activities for development for the entire United Nations system. Yet, the impact evaluation studies conducted by the United Nations suggest that capacity-building is still seen as an area reserved to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP);

(e) The United Nations system has helped in the conceptual evolution of capacity-building from human resource development to institution-building and organizational development. The International Labour Organization (ILO), UNDP and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have all contributed to changing the concept of poverty so that it now includes the dimensions of human capabilities and participation. Nevertheless, the relation between poverty eradication and the capacity-building needed to

address it is an area that still requires further progress, in order to develop a coherent system-wide approach;

(f) The impact evaluations also showed that the pursuit of poverty eradication as a central goal for the system could be linked, in a more structural way, to the development role played by each system organization. The lack of a clear link leaves a certain lack of clarity regarding the way to tackle poverty eradication through specific strategies, the consistency of approaches and the appropriateness of means and skills made available by each organization. The pursuit of poverty eradication needs to be conceived, not as a remedial or compensatory initiative, but as the outcome of policies and programmes that promote inclusive economic growth and overall social development.

Recommendation 9

The General Assembly may wish to request the United Nations system organizations to review their efforts in implementing the relevant provisions of its resolutions 53/192 and 50/120 with respect to using capacity-building as a goal of technical assistance provided through their operational activities, and to report to the Economic and Social Council, at its substantive session of 2002, through the Secretary-General, on the results achieved in this area.

Recommendation 10

The General Assembly may wish to take note of the impact evaluations of capacity-building and poverty eradication undertaken according to Assembly resolution 53/192, requesting system organizations to review the conclusions reached by these evaluations and the lessons learned in the light of their own experience, and to report to the Economic and Social Council, at its substantive session of 2002, through the Secretary-General, on the results of this review.

The General Assembly may also wish to request that the impact evaluation activity be continued on a more extensive scale, covering a larger sample of countries, and urge donor countries to provide the necessary support for this purpose. The Assembly may wish to reiterate the call in its resolution 53/192 for recipient Governments concerned to be fully and effectively involved in such evaluations, and encourage the United Nations system to support those Member States that intend to undertake these evaluations themselves, as and when required. The Assembly may also wish to request the Secretary-General to report on the results of this impact evaluation activity at its fifty-ninth session, through the Economic and Social Council, in the context of the triennial policy review.

VIII. Some issues of field-level coordination

A. Simplification and harmonization of rules and procedures

54. A major impediment to the coherent functioning of the United Nations development system has been the multiplicity of rules, procedures and modalities specific to each organization. Simplification and rationalization have long been on the reform agenda, with mixed results. The UNDAF process provided an impetus to United Nations funds and programmes to make further progress in this area. From the feedback from country teams and programme countries it emerges that, despite the progress made, a real and lasting breakthrough has yet to take place. The culture and working methods of system organizations are still governed by the different agency-specific rules and procedures. A stage is now reached where further significant progress is possible only with more intensive initiatives at the headquarters of the organizations. An assessment of the progress (or lack of progress) achieved was presented at the substantive session of 2000 of the Economic and Social Council,[8] which led to important conclusions on the need for further action, especially at headquarters level, by United Nations system organizations.

B. Resident coordinator system

55. Since its inception in 1977 (see General Assembly resolution 32/197), the functioning of the resident coordinator system has significantly evolved and its role has been strengthened. The concept of the resident coordinator system is now accepted by the entire United Nations system and by the programme

countries as the most important sign of the system's presence at the country level and as a key instrument for system-wide field-level coordination. The reform process of the United Nations, launched by the Secretary-General in 1997, aimed at, inter alia, further strengthening the functioning of the resident coordinator system in accordance with Assembly resolutions 47/199 and 50/120. In resolution 53/192, the Assembly called for a greater use of the resident coordinator system in support of the Government's efforts in coordinating external assistance in the pursuit of national development goals.

56. Member States, at the 2001 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, confirmed the role of the resident coordinator system in system-wide coordination at the country level. They acknowledged that it could play a decisive role in enhancing the efficient and effective functioning of the United Nations system at the country level. Member States have welcomed the continued improvement in the functioning of the resident coordinator system. They recognized that, since 1997, the resident coordinator system had been significantly enhanced in terms of resident coordinator assessment, selection and appraisal mechanisms, communications between agency headquarters and field offices, and functioning of country teams.[9]

57. Nevertheless, there is further room to promote the participation in the resident coordinator system of the United Nations specialized agencies, inter alia, by establishing more effective mechanisms for a more direct and immediate dialogue and feedback between the resident coordinator and these agencies, especially the small technical agencies as well as regional commissions. It is also possible to introduce innovations that may enhance the capacity of the resident coordinator system to involve and interact with other partners like the Bretton Woods institutions, bilateral donors and the civil society. It is important to encourage, in the resident coordinator system, a sense of belonging to the United Nations system as a whole, thereby reinvigorating the commitment of all United Nations organizations to more substantive collaboration in areas such as thematic groups and joint programmes. There is also further room to intensify efforts to involve the broader donor community in the work of the resident coordinator system and facilitate closer complementarity in the country work of all external partners. Efforts must be undertaken to facilitate the dialogue of the resident coordinator system with the Government and civil society.

C. Common premises and shared services

58. Common premises, including the promotion of the concept of the United Nations House, and shared services are important contributions to the enhancement of the efficiency of programme delivery and improvement of the effectiveness of United Nations development support. Progress has been made in the past three years under the guidance of UNDG, as detailed in addendum 2. This process has to be sustained and intensified in close consultation with the concerned Governments.

D. Monitoring and evaluation

59. The current efforts to focus on results and benchmarks for the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (see General Assembly resolution 55/162) and the work under way for the preparation of a long-term "road map" provide the setting for defining the directions in which monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities of operational activities could evolve in the future. As illustrated in addendum 1, the Assembly, in the past three triennial policy reviews, identified four principles as regards the area of M&E: (a) the need to strengthen national capacity in M&E; (b) the importance of adopting the programme approach, as the preferred modality for development cooperation; (c) the need to encourage joint evaluations; and (d) the need to improve effectiveness and impact of operational activities for development.

60. Despite the efforts made to implement these principles, moving from project-level towards strategic and policy-oriented monitoring, the impact evaluations show that there is little institutional memory within the system on the impact of its operational activities and there is need to enhance its capacity to learn from past experiences. It is not clear whether there has been a clear shift in the focus of M&E practices away from technical concerns that still pivot on project management issues (ensuring technical accountability) and whether the system is moving towards more strategic concerns of country-level effectiveness and programme and organizational impact. Current M&E practices do not seem to indicate that the system and

recipient countries have achieved an appropriate degree of lesson learning, so that development efforts could take full account of the outcomes from past experiences.

Recommendation 11

The General Assembly may wish to take note of the progress achieved in the simplification and harmonization of rules and procedures of the United Nations development system. The Assembly may also wish to call for an intensification of efforts by all system organizations to introduce or continue, especially at headquarters level, the process of simplification and harmonization of rules and procedures. This process should address, in particular, decentralization, financial management and country programming procedures, and should aim at reducing, where appropriate, complexities and diversity of requirements. The objective should be to ensure that these reforms produce a recognizable impact at the country level by reducing the transaction costs of operational activities for development both to the recipient countries and to the United Nations system and promote their integration in national programmes.

The General Assembly may also wish to reiterate that any innovation in this area should promote the full participation of the Government and a broader dialogue with other players at the national level, and should be responsive to the needs and capacity of recipient countries.

The General Assembly might wish to urge the United Nations system organizations to ensure that progress towards harmonization in the programming procedures within the system should take full advantage of the potential for collaboration with other donors, including bilateral donors, with a view to achieving better integration of operational activities in national development efforts.

The General Assembly may also wish to request UNDG and the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) to address the requirements for further harmonization and simplification of procedures and to submit, through the Secretary-General, a yearly report to the Economic and Social Council on progress achieved in these areas.

Recommendation 12

The General Assembly may wish to reiterate support for continued strengthening of the resident coordinator system, with full participation of all system organizations (including those with no field-level representation and the regional commissions), as an important vehicle for the efficient and effective functioning of the United Nations system at the country level and as an instrument contributing to the coordination of system activities in close consultation with the national Government.

Recommendation 13

In taking note of the progress achieved in the area of common premises and shared services at the country level within the United Nations system, the General Assembly may wish to request the Executive Boards of the United Nations funds and programmes to consider initiatives to pursue further progress in these areas at the next joint sessions of their Executive Boards by developing a joint programme of action and to submit it to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2002.

Recommendation 14

The General Assembly may wish to reiterate the need to strengthen capacities of the recipient countries to perform effective programme, projects and financial monitoring as well as impact evaluations of operational activities funded by the United Nations. The Assembly may wish to request the United Nations funds and programmes and the secretariats of United Nations conventions to carry out an assessment of the extent to which system organizations learn lessons from their evaluation systems and to report to the Economic and Social Council thereon, through the Secretary-General, at its substantive session of 2002.

E. Involvement of specialized agencies

61. As an important reservoir of knowledge and expertise, the specialized agencies are integral and important parts of the United Nations development system. As the world moves towards a knowledge society, their roles will be even more important in the future in the normative and standard-setting areas and in harnessing their activities for assistance to developing countries in acquiring technical know-how and responding to technological changes for development. This is even more valid for smaller agencies that are technically focused. In order that they may play their potential roles, it is important to enhance the involvement of specialized agencies in the country-level dialogue between the United Nations system and the Government and other national partners. Many specialized agencies, especially the smaller ones, do not have direct field representation and national stakeholders in recipient countries may find it difficult to have access to their services and their potential contribution to development. Adequate resources for this purpose, including budgetary support to specialized agencies, are a crucial condition for achieving this objective. The decline or stagnation of funding for United Nations operational activities for development, particularly UNDP core funding, and the shift to national execution in the early 1990s, have had the unintended consequence of diminishing the participation of specialized agencies in United Nations development cooperation, which, in conjunction with the reduction in their own technical assistance funding, has affected the access and ability of developing countries to draw upon their technical and technological expertise to support national development efforts.

F. Cooperation with international financial institutions

62. In its resolution 53/192, the General Assembly called for greater cooperation with the World Bank, regional development banks and United Nations funds and programmes. Since then, considerable progress has been made in strengthening such cooperation. The adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration and its implementation are expected to give further impetus to cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions at the country level. The challenges of globalization and the growing convergence between the United Nations development system and the Bretton Woods institutions on common priorities and areas of concentration, such as poverty reduction, capacity-building, environment, HIV/AIDS and gender, especially in the context of achieving the goals of the Millennium Declaration, opens the way for a more effective collaboration with all these institutions.

63. In the past few years, this convergence has led to better coordination at the country level and strengthened dialogue at the headquarters level. This cooperation could be further improved through greater information-sharing and better complementarity of efforts on the basis of the organizations' respective mandates, competences and advantages.

64. The dimensions of the challenges faced by recipient countries highlight their need to optimize the relevant mix of resources and skills that the United Nations development system and the Bretton Woods institutions can make available to them, through intensified collaboration, under the leadership of the Governments concerned. Processes such as CCA, UNDAF and PRSP have created opportunities for increased cooperation in some countries, which could be further enhanced.

65. The potential for greater collaboration between the United Nations development system and regional development banks should also be more fully explored and concretized, identifying further opportunities for joint involvement in operational activities for development. Considerable scope exists for such tripartite collaboration among the United Nations development system, Bretton Woods institutions and regional development banks, upon further consultations, which should involve the national Government.

Recommendation 15

In reiterating the content of paragraph 30 of its resolution 50/120 which highlights the role of the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, including the smaller technical agencies and those with no field representation, as key instruments to respond to rapidly changing technical and technological conditions, as well as that of previous resolutions, the General Assembly may recognize the need to ensure that the services of these specialized agencies are

within easier reach of requesting Governments and may wish to encourage, for that purpose, collaboration of the United Nations funds and programmes with the specialized agencies in order to promote interaction in the design and delivery of development cooperation.

Recommendation 16

In reiterating paragraph 35 of resolution 53/192, the General Assembly may wish to encourage further strengthened and systematic cooperation between the United Nations funds and programmes, the specialized agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions as well as with the regional development banks, calling for increased complementarity, increased use for technical cooperation of the knowledge and expertise available within the United Nations system, better division of labour and enhanced coherence in the respective activities for more effective support to recipient countries, especially when facing the challenges of globalization and international development, in order to assist recipient Governments in their national development efforts, in accordance with their priorities.

IX. Other dimensions of operational activities

A. Relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development cooperation

66. In recent years, the number of countries facing special situations has continued to grow and there has been a concomitant increase in attention to the interlinkages between conflict prevention, relief, rehabilitation and development and the need for a comprehensive approach, which relies upon combined relevant capabilities of the organizations of the system to support such countries for restoration of peace and longer-term development. The interrelationships among relief, development and peace operations need to be further clarified. The interaction of these dimensions in countries in special circumstances represents a major challenge for the United Nations system, which calls for new skills and forms of collaboration and response capacities. There is broad consensus that long-term sustainable development cannot be put on hold even at times of crisis or post-crisis and that it has to be pursued while shorter-term interventions are urgently required.

67. Several modalities are being used in the United Nations system to facilitate planning and coordination in these situations. CCA and UNDAF used flexibly in relation to the consolidated appeals process (CAP) and the strategic framework provide opportunities to assist countries in such situations in respect of developing and implementing a comprehensive national development strategy. The improvement of tools and collaborative arrangements applicable to countries in special development situations requires continuing attention.[10]

B. Gender in development

68. The General Assembly in its resolution 53/192 called for mainstreaming gender in the context of operational activities for development. To this end, the United Nations system has taken several steps since then through various instruments such as CCA and UNDAF, country-level thematic groups, and the work of the UNDG sub-group on gender and its working group on the resident coordinator system (see addendum 1 for details). Efforts have also been made in the areas of training on gender and capacity-building, as well as through the dissemination of best practices on gender. The gender perspective has been given particular attention in relation to poverty eradication. Networks of gender specialists have been established within and between some organizations, making better use of existing capacity in this area. Individual entities of the United Nations system have also initiated internal measures to bring about greater gender balance in their organization. Member States noted with satisfaction, at the substantive session of 2001 of the Economic and Social Council, the general trend towards mainstreaming a gender perspective as an important component of operational activities and are encouraged that this perspective receives further and consistent consideration in country programmes and designs.

69. In the 2001 high-level debate of the Economic and Social Council, Member States called for further work in areas such as equitable access to financial and productive resources for women and other issues related to poverty and the condition of rural women.

Member States also encouraged the system to intensify its efforts to bring the gender perspective into new and emerging areas, such as HIV/AIDS, peace and security, ICT and financing for development. Actions in these areas require closer and innovative collaborations among system organizations and should be defined in consultation with the Governments concerned.

Recommendation 17

The General Assembly may wish to reiterate the provisions of paragraph 39 of its resolution 53/192, which recognized that relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development required a comprehensive approach and noted the need for an early application of development tools in humanitarian emergencies.

The General Assembly may also wish to give further consideration to the interconnections between peace and development, in line with the United Nations Millennium Declaration, and request that the United Nations system, in consultation with Member States concerned, give greater attention to measures of development cooperation that can help in the prevention of armed conflicts and in peace-building, and to measures that enhance the interaction and complementarity between humanitarian assistance and operational activities for development, and also request that the United Nations system strengthen appropriate tools for assistance in such situations.

Recommendation 18

The General Assembly may wish to reiterate the provisions of paragraph 47 of its resolution 53/192, which calls for gender mainstreaming in operational activities for development of the United Nations system in all fields, in particular in support of poverty eradication, and take note of the progress achieved in this area, also through the experience accumulated with CCA and UNDAF processes and theme groups on gender established at the country level. The Assembly may also wish to call for renewed efforts in gender mainstreaming in the frameworks of the system's operational activities, inter alia, through training and analysis of sex-disaggregated and gender-sensitive data, as well as adequate dissemination of good practices.

C. Regional dimensions

70. Although much of the development cooperation of the United Nations system is focused at the country level, the regional and subregional dimensions have special importance in the context of the many cross-border, regional and global issues and concerns. The General Assembly has urged greater integration of these dimensions in the operational activities of the system. As a result, regional commissions and regional and subregional offices of some agencies are becoming more involved in the preparation of CCA and UNDAF, as required in the guidelines of these instruments. It is expected that regional entities will contribute more actively to the work of the system at the country level in the future. Some agencies traditionally have strong regional and subregional field structures for service delivery, while others focus considerable effort on cross-border issues and their implications. At the same time, there is a growing interest with respect to strengthening the relations of the United Nations system with other regional, subregional and interregional organizations, including also regional development banks, for broader partnerships in dealing with the challenges of development.

71. Governing bodies of the United Nations funds and programmes and the specialized agencies still need to take more fully into account the regional and subregional dimensions of development cooperation, including suggestions from regional commissions that are relevant for the definition of country programmes. At the field level, the resident coordinator system needs to become more sensitive to regional and subregional aspects that are relevant to the national context. The incorporation of these dimensions into the operational activities of the United Nations system should be achieved in close consultation with Governments so as to ensure the consideration of national needs.

72. Since regional commissions, in most cases, do not have a country presence, their views and suggestions should be communicated to the governing bodies of the system organizations and to the resident coordinators through regular channels of communication and better use of information technology.

D. Technical and economic cooperation among developing countries

73. Technical cooperation among developing countries is a critical dimension of the United Nations development cooperation. It is an instrument of collective self-reliance and mutual reinforcement of developing countries. Integrating it into the operational activities for development can enhance their efficiency and impact and be beneficial to the developing countries. At the substantive session of 2001 of the Economic and Social Council, Member States reiterated their appreciation for the contribution of the United Nations system to the technical and economic cooperation among developing countries. They also noted the efforts made in the formulation of new policy instruments to mainstream the modality of technical and economic cooperation among developing countries (TCDC/ECDC) into the context of operational activities, by revising the TCDC guidelines, establishing TCDC focal points, designing appropriate policy instruments, disseminating best practices and promoting indigenous knowledge, know-how and technology through South-South cooperation. Since UNDP remains the major provider of support to TCDC, some Member States at the Council welcomed the priority given to TCDC in the UNDP Administrator's Business Plans, 2002-2003, and called for enhanced contributions to the core resources of the UNDP Special Unit for TCDC.

Recommendation 19

The General Assembly may wish to reiterate the need to incorporate the regional and subregional dimensions in United Nations development cooperation and may wish to encourage the United Nations funds and programmes and the specialized agencies, both at headquarters and at the country level, as well as the resident coordinators, in close consultation with Governments, to provide increasing support to regional initiatives and secure greater involvement of regional commissions in the formulation of strategic and coordination frameworks, as well as in the formulation of individual country programmes.

Recommendation 20

The General Assembly may wish to reiterate its call for a more concerted and coordinated effort to integrate and mainstream the modality of TCDC into the framework of United Nations development cooperation, in collaboration with the UNDP Special Unit for TCDC and all other relevant international institutions within the United Nations system as well as with the developing countries concerned, including identifying and evolving necessary mechanisms for that purpose.

Notes

[1] General Assembly resolution 55/2.

[2] Some developing countries have attached high priority to ICT and are looking for external assistance in this area, including from the United Nations system. Pursuant to the United Nations Millennium Declaration, which inter alia, endorsed the Ministerial Declaration of the high-level segment of 2000 of the Economic and Social Council entitled "Development and international cooperation in the twenty-first century: the role of information technology in the context of a knowledge-based global economy" (see *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/55/3/Rev.1), chap. III, para. 17), an ICT Task Force is currently seeking to develop modalities to strengthen the capacities of developing countries in this domain.

[3] See report of the Secretary-General entitled "Progress in the implementation of the multi-year funding frameworks and evaluation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework" (A/56/70-E/2001/58) of 14 May 2001.

[4] See report of the Secretary-General entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform" (A/51/950) of 14 July 1997, para. 161, Action 10.

[5] See, inter alia, the preambular paragraphs of General Assembly resolution 44/211, which was adopted pursuant to the 1989 comprehensive triennial policy review.

[6] See report of the Secretary-General entitled "Progress in the implementation of the multi-year funding frameworks and evaluation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework" (A/56/70-E/2001/58).

[7] The mission reports for each country are also available online at http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/impa-intro.htm.

[8] See report of the Secretary-General entitled "Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation: funding operational activities for development of the United Nations system, simplification and harmonization of programming, operational and administrative procedures and United Nations funds and programmes: oversight role of the Council" (E/2000/46), sect. III on simplification and harmonization of programming, operational and administrative procedures.

[9] Progress achieved is detailed in addendum 1.

[10] See the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (A/56/95-E/2001/85) of 18 June 2001, in particular sects. IV.A and IV.E. The importance of linking relief and development activities is reflected in General Assembly resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991 and has been reiterated by the Economic and Social Council in its agreed conclusions 1998/1 (see *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/53/3), chap. VII, para. 5) and agreed conclusions 1999/1 (ibid., *Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/54/3/Rev.1), chap. VI, para. 5).